

SENATE BILL 528

By Southerland

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;  
Title 5; Title 6; Title 7; Title 10; Title 65; Title 67  
and Title 68, relative to communication services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1.

(a) There is created the Commission on Technology (COT) to coordinate the development of broadband policies in an effort to advance the expansion of broadband across this state.

(b) COT shall be composed of the following members or the members' designees:

- (1) The chief information officer;
- (2) The commissioner of economic and community development;
- (3) The commissioner of education;
- (4) The chief executive officer of the board of regents;
- (5) The state librarian and archivist;
- (6) The secretary of state;
- (7) A representative from the Tennessee Association of Independent Colleges and Schools appointed by the governor;
- (8) The executive director of the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations;
- (9) A representative from the County Technical Association Service appointed by the governor;
- (10) A representative from the Municipal Technical Advisory Service appointed by the governor;

(11) A representative from the Tennessee Library Association appointed by the governor;

(12) A representative from the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce appointed by the governor;

(13) The governor, to serve as a non-voting ex officio member;

(14) The speaker of the house of representatives, to serve as a non-voting ex officio member; and

(15) The speaker of the senate, to serve as a non-voting ex officio member.

(c) The duties of COT are as follows:

(1) Foster collaborative relationships between local governments, private businesses, and the state to expand broadband;

(2) Monitor federal funding opportunities to advance broadband expansion in this state;

(3) Establish goals and progress metrics for expansion of broadband throughout communities within this state that will track progress towards providing high-speed broadband service to residents and businesses and affordable broadband connections;

(4) Provide education and information regarding broadband, such as broadband infrastructure, digital inclusion, best practices, and digital literacy, to local governments that represent residents and businesses that are located in traditionally underserved communities; and

(5) Recommend broadband policies at the state and local levels.

(d)

(1) COT members receive no compensation for their services on the commission but shall receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending meetings of COT and for travel incident thereto, in accordance with the

comprehensive travel regulations promulgated by the department of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

(2) The governor shall call the first meeting of COT, at which time, and annually thereafter, the members shall elect a chair. Thereafter, COT shall meet at the call of the chair, but at least quarterly.

(3) A quorum consists of a simple majority of the members, and all official action of COT requires a quorum.

(4) COT shall prepare an annual report that must be published on the secretary of state's website.

(e)

(1) COT shall be administered by an executive director who must be appointed by COT, whose compensation must be established by COT, and who serves at the pleasure of COT.

(2) For administrative purposes only, COT is attached to the secretary of state.

(f) To effectuate the purposes of this act, the executive director may:

(1) Request from any branch, department, division, board, bureau, commission, or other agency of the state or that receives state funds, and the same must provide such information as will enable the executive director to best serve COT and perform the duties required by this act; and

(2) Employ all necessary and appropriate personnel to carry out this act.

The personnel serves at the pleasure of the executive director.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring

it.